

Consul-General of Japan in Sydney's Newsletter

No. 43 Lismore and Yamato Takada: The mission of the first sister city relationship between Australia and Japan

30 June 2021

With the outbreak of COVID-19 infections, on 26 June, stay-at-home orders for a two-week period were announced for Greater Sydney and surrounding areas. These strict regulations are the first since the regulations in response to the initial outbreak of infections last year. In addition, in the Northern Territory, stay-at-home orders for a two-day period were announced for Darwin and surrounding areas on 27 June, and the period was extended later. This consulate will steadily respond to such changing circumstances, including the prompt issuing of consular emails. If you have any points regarding this that you wish to bring to our notice, please feel free to do so.

Just before this situation developed, from 18 to 20 June, I visited Lismore for the first time. Lismore is a regional city with a population of around 44,000 people, located in the north-east of NSW, close to the state border. The city boasts the main campus of Southern Cross University (SCU) and is very close to NSW's easternmost point of Byron Bay and Queensland's capital, Brisbane.

Lismore has played a major role in reconciliation between Japan and Australia; in 1963, when anti-Japanese sentiment was still strong after the war, Lismore and Yamato Takada City in Nara Prefecture became the first ever sister cities between Japan and Australia. I took the opportunity to visit Lismore on the occasion of the Lantern Parade, which has become a local annual event. I also met and spoke directly with the Mayor of Lismore, the Vice-Chancellor of SCU and other local representatives.

In this newsletter, as I report on my visit to Lismore, let us reflect upon the role Lismore has played in the development of Japan-Australia relations, including its sister-city relationship with Yamato Takada.



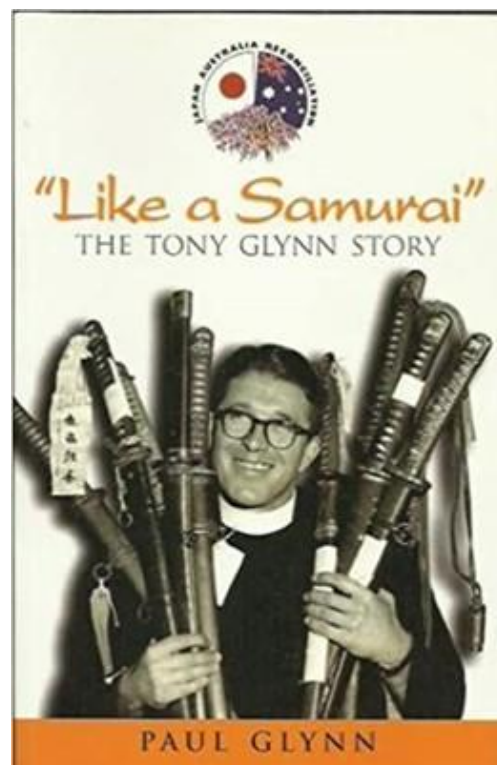
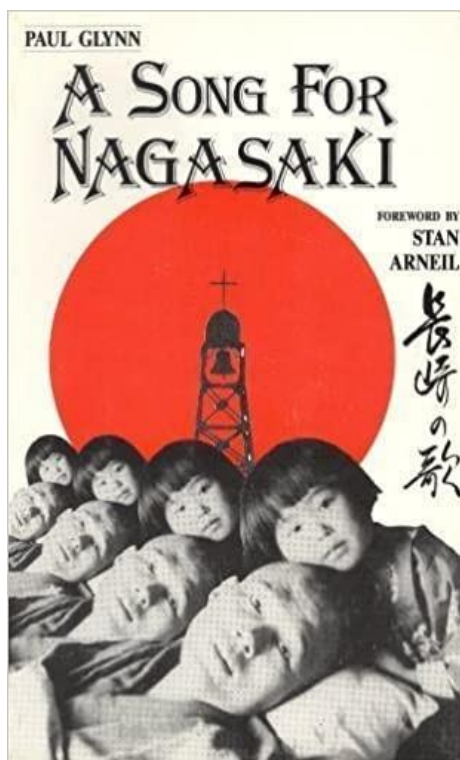
Meeting Fr Paul Glynn in the Marist Fathers villa where he lives
(15 June 2021)

- **Meeting Father Paul Glynn**

The first person to connect Lismore and Japan was Father Lionel Marsden from Lismore. During the Second World War, Father Marsden became a POW of the Imperial Japanese forces and had the tough experience of being the chaplain on the Thai-Burma Railway. In the midst of this, he determined to devote his life to the promotion of reconciliation with Japan, and after returning to Australia, he went to Japan in 1949.

The brothers Tony and Paul Glynn were in a lower year at the same high school (St John's College Woodlawn) that Fr Marsden had attended. Meeting Fr Marsden had a profound impact on the brothers, who would both decide to become priests and go to Japan in 1953 and 1955.

While working on local welfare projects as a parish priest in Nara, the older brother, Father Tony Glynn, undertook many activities to promote reconciliation between Japan and Australia at a time when anti-Japanese sentiment was strong after the war. Among his activities were organizing Japanese exhibitions in Australia, organizing the return of Japanese swords brought back by Australian military personnel, and holding Buddhist-Christian joint prayer services in various places in both Japan and Australia. He was loved and highly regarded by many people, and in 1994, when he died at the age of 68 in Japan, 5,000 people attended his funeral over three days.



Books by Fr Paul Glynn

“A Song for Nagasaki” and “Like a Samurai: The Tony Glynn Story”

The younger brother, Father Paul Glynn, was posted to Takada Catholic Church in Yamato Takada City in Nara Prefecture. While he was there, he learnt that there was not a single Japanese city among Australia’s more than 60 sister-city relationships. He mediated between Yamato Takada and his birthplace, Lismore, to establish a sister-city relationship, and in 1963, this was realized. Fr Paul also published many books including a history of Christianity in Nagasaki and the atomic bombing of Nagasaki, and a biography of his brother, Fr Tony.

Today, Fr Paul lives in the Marist Fathers villa in Hunters Hill, a suburb in Sydney. This year, he became 93 years old. Before I visited Lismore, I met there with Fr Paul for the first time on 15 June. I was incredibly grateful to hear how he feels about his lifelong role to deepen Australians' understanding of Japanese history and culture, and his thoughts on the history regarding the provision for eliminating racial discrimination in the Covenant of the League of Nations and the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Brothers Fr Tony and Fr Paul Glynn dedicated their lives to achieving reconciliation between Japan and Australia at a difficult period in the relationship between both countries. I feel that today's excellent Japan-Australia relationship is thanks to the efforts of Fr Tony and Fr Paul Glynn and many more people who have come before us.



**With the Vice Chancellor of Southern Cross University and
Ms Janelle Saffin MP at the Father Tony Glynn Japan-Australia Centre
(18 June 2021)**

● **Southern Cross University's Father Tony Glynn Japan-Australia Centre**

The first place I visited in Lismore on 18 June was Southern Cross University (SCU)'s Father Tony Glynn Japan-Australia Centre. At the centre, I was welcomed by local representatives including the SCU Vice Chancellor, Professor Tyrone Carlin, and Ms Janelle Saffin MP, state member for Lismore, and I realized that the centre continues to play an important role.

The idea for this centre started in 1999 when Mrs Tazuko McLaren, who was teaching as a Lecturer in Japanese in the Faculty of Arts, Asian Studies, at SCU, heard that applications were open to the Japan (Osaka) World Exposition Commemorative Fund (JEC Fund). After consulting with university authorities about her idea for a Japan Centre, a Japan Centre Committee was established.

At the time, Mrs McLaren also had a chance encounter at Lismore's Catholic church with Fr Paul Glynn and Mr Chiba Shigeki, a director who made a film about Japan-Australia reconciliation called "The Railway of Love". Watching the film, Mrs McLaren was so moved by the deep love that the Glynn brothers had for Japan, that she decided she wanted to name the Japan Centre after Fr Tony Glynn. However, a requirement of the JEC Fund application was that applicants had to cover half the cost of their proposal and for this reason no application could be made then.

Therefore, the committee planned a fundraising concert tour of Japan by "Isabella a capella", an a capella group in SCU's music department. Gaining cooperation from the Australian Embassy in Tokyo, the Embassy of Japan in Australia, Yamato Takada City, Japan-Australia societies across Japan, SCU and partner universities, concerts were held in various locations around Japan over four years. In addition, traditional Kyogen players of the Shigeyama Family from Kyoto came to Lismore and Sydney to give performances. Through these, the necessary funding was successfully raised. In September 2004, the "Father Tony Glynn Japan-Australia Centre" was established on the university campus. To this day, Mrs Tazuko McLaren OAM works for the centre and Japan-Australia exchange activities as SCU's Japan liaison officer and Japanese teacher.



**A display case with items commemorating Fr Tony Glynn
(18 June 2021)**

Inside the centre, visitors can experience Japanese culture - Japanese paintings and kimonos are on display, and there is even a spacious *tatami* corner.

There is also a display of items such as the national awards presented to Fr Tony by both the Governments of Japan and Australia, his honorary citizenship certificate from Nara City, collected works and newspaper clippings. Viewing these, I was able to understand the achievements of Fr Tony and Fr Paul Glynn over many years.

I am delighted that this centre has been established at Lismore's university to pass on the beliefs of Fr Tony who dedicated himself to Japan-Australia reconciliation, and that Japan-Australia exchange is continuing and developing based on this centre.



**The church near the birthplace of Fr Tony and Fr Paul Glynn in Lismore
(18 June 2021)**

Later that day, I visited the birthplace of Fr Tony and Fr Paul Glynn in Lismore. Different people live there now, but the house itself is the same as it used to be. The nearby church was built before the war and I was told that the brothers Glynn must have attended it.

Visiting the place where people who created history grew up and dedicated themselves to reconciliation between Japan and Australia made me renew my determination about what I should do now.



**At Lismore City Council office with Cr Vanessa Ekins, Mayor, Cr Neil Marks, Deputy Mayor, Cr Darlene Cook, Ms Janelle Saffin MP, NSW State Member for Lismore, and Mr Akaiwa Hiroto, Director of CLAIR Sydney Office
(18 June 2021)**

● **Lismore City and Yamato Takada City**

On 18 June, I visited the Lismore City Council office and greeted various city officials including Mayor Vanessa Ekins. I handed over a message from Yamato Takada Mayor Horiuchi Taizo and Yamato Takada Lismore Sister City Association Chairman Wakimoto Yoshikiyo, and I also conveyed my gratitude to them for developing exchange over many years as the first sister city between Japan and Australia. Ikebana International Lismore Chapter also has a long history and I was able to enjoy ikebana arrangements by members of the chapter at the council chambers.

Exchange between the two cities has developed across many areas since they became connected as sister cities in 1963 – this began with mutual visits by city delegations, and since 1985 has included mutual student exchange trips every year, and includes sports and cultural exchange, exchange between sister schools and anniversary events.

Due to the impact of COVID-19, mutual student exchange was cancelled last year and this year. However, the cities intend to deepen exchange even further, looking ahead to the 60th anniversary of their sister city relationship in two years' time.



**Social gathering with the Mayor of Lismore and representatives of the
Japan-Australia Centre
(18 June 2021)**

In the evening of the same day, a social gathering arranged by Mrs McLaren was held with the participation of Mayor Ekins and representatives of the Father Tony Glynn Japan-Australia Centre

Many of the participants had been to Japan and it was very encouraging to hear their memories of Japan, about their activities supporting the centre and their various connections with Japan. Furthermore, about Lismore itself, I learnt that there is not only its traditional industries of dairy and agriculture; there is a new influx of younger people coming to the area through the promotion of music and art. I felt a new energy in regional NSW.

The following day on 19 June, guided by Dr Robert Smith, President of the Lismore Historical Society, and Mrs McLaren, I visited the Lismore Regional Museum and the Lismore Regional Art Gallery, and I learnt about the development of industry, life and culture, and about the history of coexistence with Indigenous Australians in this region.

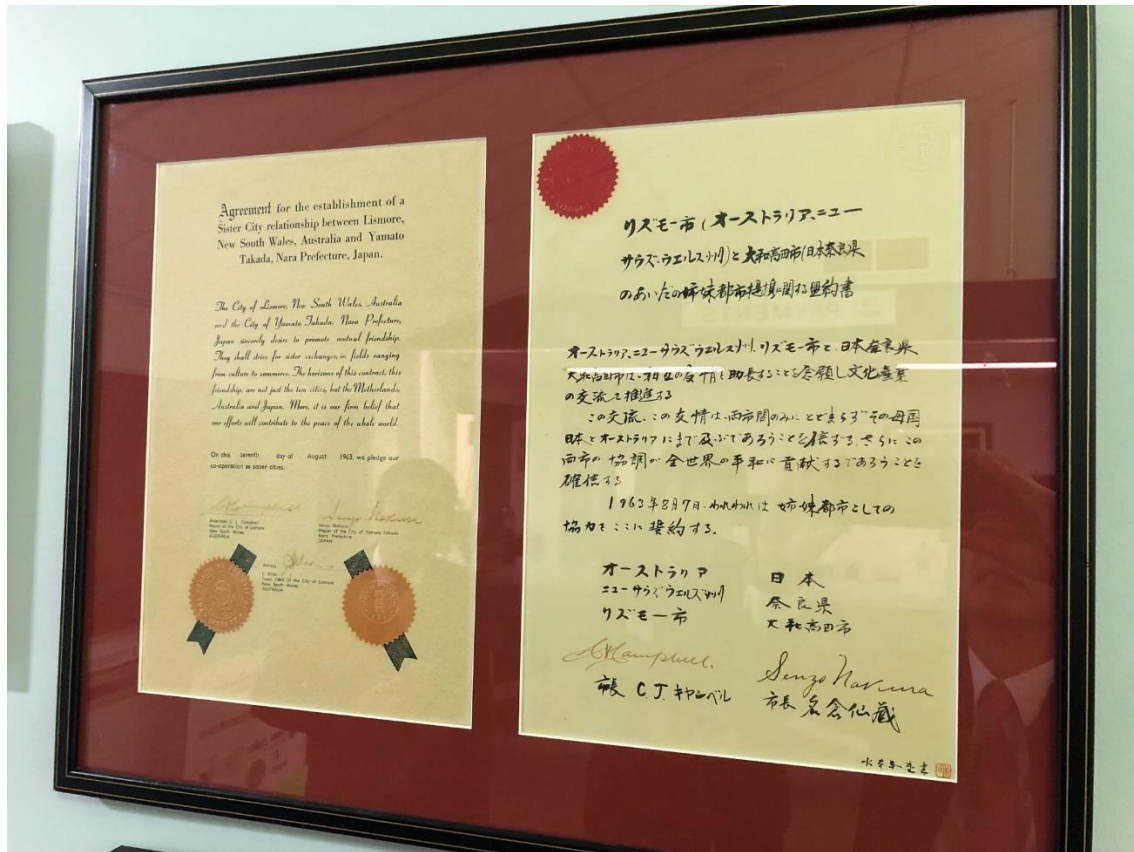


**“Miku-chan” at the Lantern Parade
(19 June 2021)**

Then in the evening of 19 June, I participated in the Lantern Parade, carrying the “Miku-chan” lantern that Lismore City made - Miku-chan is the mascot of Yamato Takada City.

The Lantern Parade was previously held in the streets of central Lismore, but due to COVID-19, the parade was cancelled last year, and this year, it was held in at the showground with restricted numbers. Despite this, it was a great event: from the afternoon, there were various events for children, booths and food stalls; in the evening, approximately 50 large lanterns formed the parade which went around the ring twice; and the evening ended with fireworks.

Japan has participated in Lismore's largest annual event in this way every year, and I was pleased to have been able to take on that role myself this time, when COVID-19 made international travel so difficult.



**Agreement for the establishment of a Sister City relationship between
Lismore City and Yamato Takada City
(Signed 7 August 1963, photo taken 18 June 2021)**

- **The mission of the first sister city relationship between Australia and Japan**

On the Yamato Takada City website, the significance of this first sister city relationship agreement is explained as below:

The “Sister City Relationship Agreement” between Lismore and Yamato Takada describes the friendship between the two cities in the following way: “The horizons of this contract, this friendship, are not just the two cities, but the Motherlands, Australia and Japan. More, it is our firm belief that our efforts will contribute to the peace of the whole world.”

The spirit of friendship defined in the agreement has been passed down to this day, and there are now more than 100 sister cities between Japan and Australia.

This agreement document hangs in the lobby of the Lismore City Council office even now. From Fr Tony and Fr Paul Glynn to Director Chiba Shigeki, Mrs Tazuko McLaren and the people of Lismore, the baton of Japan-Australia exchange and reconciliation is being passed on. I, too, would like to receive this baton and hand it over to many people so that this spirit of friendship develops even further in both Japan and Australia.

Lismore City and Yamato City sister city relationship (Consulate-General of Japan in Sydney website)

https://www.sydney.au.emb-japan.go.jp/itpr_en/sister_city.html#lismore

Paul Glynn (2008) *Like a Samurai; the Tony Glynn Story*, Marist Fathers Books

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/0958184429>

Japanese translation of the above title 『サムライの如く：トニ・グリーン物語』（Kodomo no Sato, 2009)

<https://www.amazon.co.jp/dp/B08LVTSXJJ>

<https://www.eonet.ne.jp/~kodomonosato/book.html>

Interview with Mrs Tazuko McLaren by Nichigo Press, January 2019 (Japanese)

<https://nichigopress.jp/column/imaikiru/176227/>

“The Railway of Love: Connecting Japan and Australia” (1999, DVD 2004) – directed by Chiba Shigeki (Japanese, English subtitles)

<http://www.ne.jp/asahi/omaneki/2000/aitetu.htm>

<https://ci.nii.ac.jp/ncid/BB10875182>

50th Anniversary of Japan-Australia Sister Cities – Council of Local Authorities for Internationalisation (CLAIR) Forum, article in December 2013 issue of CLAIR newsletter (Japanese)

http://www.clair.or.jp/j/forum/forum/pdf_290/05_kaigai01.pdf

The wish behind the first Japan-Australia sister city agreement – priests dedicated to reconciliation between the peoples of both countries (Council of Local Authorities for Internationalisation (CLAIR) Sydney Office) (Japanese)

<http://www.ilgc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/JF-1-3->

[P10-%E6%97%A5%E8%B1%AA%E5%88%9D%E3%81%AE%E5%A7%89%E5%A6%B9%E6%8F%90%E6%90%BA%E3%81%AB%E3%81%93%E3%82%81%E3%82%89%E3%82%8C%E3%81%9F%E9%A1%98%E3%81%84.pdf](http://www.ilgc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/JF-1-3-P10-%E6%97%A5%E8%B1%AA%E5%88%9D%E3%81%AE%E5%A7%89%E5%A6%B9%E6%8F%90%E6%90%BA%E3%81%AB%E3%81%93%E3%82%81%E3%82%89%E3%82%8C%E3%81%9F%E9%A1%98%E3%81%84.pdf)

Bamboo Shoots: A quarterly newsletter issued by Yamato Takada Lismore Sister City Association, Nara, Japan (2013)

<http://www.city.yamatotakada.nara.jp/lismore/newspaper/docs/158bambooe.pdf>

<http://www.city.yamatotakada.nara.jp/lismore/newspaper/docs/160bambooe.pdf>

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